2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

Mirdita. Since adopting Islam it has married into the two other Moslem tribes of the group, Matija and Dibra.

2. *Matija* is wholly Moslem. It had a very bad reputation when I was travelling in Albania, and was so much averse to foreigners that I did not visit it. It was about the only tribe that refused to accept blood-gelt and insisted on blood, and the more civilized tribes of Maltsia e Madhe used to say: "We are not so bad as Matija." It was notorious for constant cattle-stealing from the herds wintering on the plains and was said to consist of about twelve hundred houses. It has since come before the public, as its chief, Ahmed Zogu, with a large number of armed men at his back, aspired to rule Albania. He was expelled by the Albanians in 1924, but was returned forcibly to the country by the support of Belgrade, and it is said of other Powers, who saw in him a ready tool to assist their schemes. By first giving territory to the Serbs and then great concessions to Italy he has now put Albania into a difficulty, and she has become a bone of contention between Jugoslavia and Italy. In 1908, when all the tribes were eager for an independent Albania, no one could have foreseen its destinies would be thrown into the hands of the wildest and least educated of the tribes.

3. *Dibra.*—This tribe, too, I found unvisitable. It had as bad a reputation as Matija, but has suffered cruelly as a result of war, for the frontier has been drawn between the Dibrani and the town of Dibra, their market. This has caused great discontent both sides of the frontier, and some fighting. A frontier under no circumstances should cut a tribe land in half—if those who draw it wish to maintain peace.

Dibra and Matija formed part of the Principality of Skender Beg in the old days. Luria belonged to Dukagini.

4. *Arnji.*—A small independent tribe on the left bank of the river Mola. It is all Moslem and an offshoot of Berisha. I was the only foreigner who had passed through it for many years, and a long debate was held before I was admitted as guest. The women all wore Mirdite dress, and I was told the tribe married mainly Mirdite women.

PRIZREN GROUP

1. *Ljuma.*—When I knew it, this was a large and strong Moslem tribe. In 1912–13 it suffered very heavily. A Serb officer in my presence described how he and his battalion had bayoneted all the women and children in part of the tribe, because "women bear men," and laughed till he choked over his beer. The Serbs were "liberating the land from the Turkish yoke." On subsequent inquiry I learnt that some 1,400 persons had been massacred. Part of this tribe is now under Serb rule.

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

173 days of the oncoming of the Turk. Lek fought on the side of Venice,
643 and when Scutari fell in 1472 he and many refugees fled to Italy along with the Venetians. But when Sultan Mahommed II died in 1481 and his sons fought for the throne, Turkish rule in Europe was in a critical state. The Serbs, however, helped to re-establish it by fighting on behalf of one of the claimants. During the confusion Lek Dukagin returned to his homelands, as did also Ivan Tzrnojevitch, the founder of Montenegro. Ivan became a vassal of the Turks, and is known to this day in Montenegro by his Turkish title, Ivan Beg. Lek Dukagin is not recorded to have done so. That he ruled as he pleased in the mountains is shown by his great fame there. It is said that in 1464 Pope Paul II had excommunicated him for his most un-Christian code.

[688] Of the descendants of the Dukagini two are recorded as turning Moslem. Some settled in Venice—a "Luca Ducagini Duca di Pulato e dell stato Ducagini" is recorded in Venice in 1506. The Bib Doda family, who, until the Great War, were the hereditary chiefs of Mirdita, claimed descent from the Dukagini, but could give no definite pedigree. The tribe Bijelopavlitch in Montenegro traces descent from Paul i Bardh (Paul the White), brother or nephew of Lek.

671 Though Lek enforced the Canon, it so much resembles tribe law
681 of other lands that we cannot believe he originated it in the fifteenth
174 century. What he evidently strove to do was to check crime by inflicting certain punishments. That—as the tribesmen always declared—he both ordered the taking of blood and fixed a punishment for so doing, is incredible. He probably modified and added to existing law and strictly enforced it.

This is the Canon so far as I know it. Dom Kol Ashti, the very worthy priest of Shkreli, gave me many facts. Others I learnt from Mgr. Miédia, now Archbishop of Scutari. Much I picked up in my travels, and by comparing all have compiled the following account. In Maltsia e Madhe the Canon was much modified. Among the Dukagini it was in more primitive form. The Turkish Government had somewhat modified it; but everywhere it emphasized the tribe. The tribe has jurisdiction only within its lands.

MURDER WITHIN THE TRIBE

682 Murder may be the result of a quarrel or it may be a blood-feud, the cause of which is more or less remote. In either case the man who
[574] has taken blood flies at once to a safe place outside the tribe. Any house is bound to give him hospitality. In the case of a feud, he is regarded as a most unfortunate man who has but done his duty. He
[609] at once proclaims his deed. The headmen of his tribe then meet and

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

order his house to be burnt. Among the Dukagini the council has power also to destroy his crops, cut down his fruit trees, slaughter his beasts, and condemn the land to lie unworked for a term of years. An incredible amount of food-stuff is thus wasted. In this group not only the man who has taken blood, but all the males of his "house," are liable for blood, so they, too, have to fly. The "house" is the home maybe of a whole family community—forty people. But the law is carried out to the last letter. Such desolated spots have I seen. But "It is the Canon, so must be obeyed," was the answer to any remonstrance I made. The women and children may scatter and find shelter in other houses if they can; they usually do. A man can save his house if he can return to it and defend it three days successfully, so that the men sent by the council cannot set fire to it; I saw "a very brave man" in Berisha who had three times saved his house thus. Or a man can save his house by inviting the head of another mehala to act as house lord and defend it with his own men. This might cause severe fighting. The council, to prevent this, then as a rule agrees to burn the house only and spare the property. The amount of property to be destroyed was always to be decided by the council.

In Maltsia e Madhe a man was allowed to redeem his house by paying from £5 to £10 by a modification of the old law.

In addition to the burning of the house, in all tribes a fine has to be paid. Fines are paid in sheep or cattle. The fines varied in different districts. In both groups a fine had to be paid to the Turkish Government. In the case of Maltsia e Madhe this was paid to the Sergerdé and the Bulukbashes, who represented the tribes in Scutari. It was generally paid punctually. "Lek decreed that a fine must be paid, so it must be." Moreover, the Turkish Government had a certain hold on all the nearer tribes, for it could hold as hostage any member of a tribe which owed blood-gelt and came to market at Scutari. The outlying tribes of Dukagini by no means always either notified or paid for their murders.

Feuds being very weakening to a tribe, the headmen of the tribe or friends of the family would attempt to stop the feud. Blood-feuds of the Dukagini and Pulati tribes are settled in the mountains; those of Maltsia e Madhe were settled in Scutari before the representatives of those tribes who lived there.

The peace-making is preceded by the "gjaksur" (he who owes blood) sending some friends to the "zoti i gjakut" (lord of blood) to ask for "besa" (promise of truce). This may be granted and further prolonged, and during the truce the gjaksur and his relatives are safe. To end the feud, "me paitue gjak" (pacify the blood), twenty-four con-jurors are needed to swear the peace oath with the gjaksur. The

693 plaintiff (lord of blood) has the right to name them. Or they may be
609 named by the "bairaktar" (head of the tribe). This is only done if the
682 matter cannot be settled by con-jurors chosen by the plaintiff.

The gjaksur has the right to object to two of the con-jurors, who must be replaced by others. The con-jurors are all men of standing in the tribe ("plect," elders; "kren," heads). They examine the facts and hear the accused ("gjaksur") and decide if peace can be made and on what terms. If all twenty-four agree to take the peace oath with him he is then reckoned innocent, and he and his family do not owe any further blood, but pay blood-gelt to the zoti i gjakut. This varied from about £25 to £50. If they all agree but one, he may be replaced by two others. If still no agreement is come to, the gjaksur may bring more con-jurors, who are members of his family, up to the number of eight.

Agreement having been come to, the whole party goes into the
682 church (or mosque) before which the council has been held. In the
609 church the candles are lighted on the altar, and in the presence of the priest the gjaksur swears his innocence. He no longer owes blood and is, therefore, innocent. Next swear those of his family who may have been summoned, and then all the con-jurors. After this the gjaksur and the zoti i gjakut frequently ratify the peace by swearing blood brotherhood (*v.* Blood Brotherhood).

By Moslems the oath is sworn in the mosque.

693 Each of the con-jurors has to be paid a small fee for his services. The plaintiff in some cases can thus annoy the accused by insisting upon the full number of con-jurors allowed by the law. A priest counts as twelve con-jurors, and sometimes an important elder is reckoned as two.

628 The oath being taken and the blood-gelt paid, the man is free to return to his burnt house and repair it. Being as a rule of solid stone, only the roof and woodwork need renewing. If he is a popular man, other members of the tribe help him both to pay the fine and start life again.

627 To Mgr. Miédia, now Archbishop of Scutari, I am indebted for an
682 account of how two families can make peace voluntarily without appeal to the law. Having ascertained by means of emissaries that peace will be acceptable, the gjaksur and his relatives choose a feast day and enter the house of the injured family with their hands bound. A child placed the wrong way round in a cradle is carried with them. If the peace offer is accepted the lord of blood loosens their bonds and puts the child straight in the cradle. The blood-gelt is then arranged and paid. This custom existed among the Dukagini.

682 The above all refers to a murder committed by one man. But it
628 may happen that several men all fire at once and kill a man. A search

579 A quarrel broke out between Krasnichi and Shala. Shala had a besa
685 with Krasnichi, but the Krasnichi had harried some Christian villages
609 near Djakova which claimed descent from Shala. Shala therefore declared the besa ended and raided Krasnichi at night, stealing three mules. This caused complications, for Shala and Krasnichi do not border with each other. Krasnichi sent three headmen to Nikaj to accuse Nikaj of having sheltered and fed the mule-stealers on their way, and being thus party to the theft. The Nikaj men and three Krasnichi sat all day at the foot of the big wooden cross in front of the church and argued furiously—Nikaj loudly protesting ignorance and innocence of the whole affair and bidding Krasnichi to go to Shala.

Vexed with Shala for getting them into trouble thus, a day or two afterwards Nikaj went a-raiding to Shala and stole two fine horses. Shala sent delegates and complained that the theft was unfair. The horses were not Shala horses but belonged to guests—some Klimenti men who had come under besa to pasture some beasts. The horses were, therefore, under besa, too, and should not be touched. Nikaj only replied rudely: "You should not leave the horses of guests straying about." And my horse and Marko's were put at night into one of the church outbuildings to secure them from retort. The two horse-stealers, however, kindly offered to sell the horses to Shala for five hundred piastres apiece. Shala was enraged. The sitting lasted till late, and the debate was put off till to-morrow. But next day the Shala men and the horses had all disappeared in the night. The two horse-thieves came in hot indignation to the church house to ask the Franciscan's advice. They considered that in stealing their own horses back and going off with them Shala had played a dirty trick and acted most unfairly. The Franciscan, Marko, and I all shouted with laughter: "Bravo, Shala!" The two thieves were hurt. In all innocence they told of the great pains they had taken to steal the horses in the first place, and now they had been robbed. It was most unfair. Nor could the padre make them see it in another light; for to them robbery from a tribe with which there is no besa was rather a merit than a crime.

Nikaj argued that if Shala had the right to take back these horses, then Shala should restore the three mules taken from Krasnichi. A delegate came from Shala to debate this and to ask, "Are you in besa with Krasnichi? If so, we return the mules." As Nikaj was in blood with Krasnichi and only a day or two before had refused to have anything to do with the mule matter, Nikaj could not defend its proposition. Shala withdrew, leaving Nikaj furious and the poor horse-thieves much depressed.

609 Such raids, of course, easily start blood-feuds. The more civilized
579 tribes and the intelligent headmen, who were increasing in number

and gradually reforming matters, were working towards punishing them in the same manner as theft within the tribe.

The fights between Montenegro and the Turks were usually brought about in this manner. The Montenegrins raided the Turkish borders, especially Herzegovina, till the Turks sent punitive expeditions. All sheep-stealers were considered heroes.

So far as my own experience goes I never had a thing stolen from me when among the Albanian tribes; they dealt honestly by me always.

FINES FOR OTHER MATTERS

In the case of rape the injured family may take blood; or it may compound for peace and accept about £30. The father of an illegitimate child must pay for its keep.

For killing a sheep or cattle a fine of about £2 to £3 per head.

For cutting wood in the forest of others, £2.

For stealing fruit, etc., according to value.

For putting a beast to graze on someone else's pasture, £2.

For putting beasts to graze on your own tribal pasture before the right season, £4.

(The sums given are only approximately taken at the then value of piastres.)

INHERITANCE

No land may be sold or bequeathed to a member of another tribe or any outsider.

The possessor of land can only sell it to his nearest male relative on his father's side.

Women cannot inherit land.

The house and such land as belongs to it is inherited by all a man's sons equally. As a matter of practice they continue living in it, and the eldest son is "zoti i shpis" (house-lord). I have seen a young man of twenty-eight years ordering his old uncles about in most peremptory manner. Expressing surprise at the way they obeyed, I was told: "They must—God has made him house-lord."

Failing sons, the property belongs equally to the nearest male relatives of the deceased, who usually would be his brothers. The eldest is then house-lord.

Should a man leave a wife who has had no children, she is of no account, and must leave the house and return to her father's house. Should she have a son under the age of fifteen she remains to mind the house till he inherits it. Till he is fifteen a guardian takes charge of his affairs. At fifteen he is of age and can carry arms. If the widow has

2: Durham B-5 (ca. 1910)1928 EG1 Albania EG1

of the shortage of women. This, I believe, is largely caused by the high rate of mortality in childbirth and the extremely hard lives of the women.

A girl, once betrothed, is the property of the family which has bought her, and must be *intacta virgo* when handed over. The most important object of marriage is to obtain sons. A sonless man had no one to avenge him, and his soul would never rest. Therefore in old days, when a girl was handed over, it was usual that the couple should cohabit, but no marriage ceremony should take place till a son was born. The Church has actively fought this custom and almost abolished it. But some cases still occur. Even when the unfortunate woman bore several daughters she might still be treated as worthless; and a married woman who has borne only daughters and is left as a widow has not the right to stay in the family house, but may be permitted to do so. If this is not allowed, her own nearest male relative has the right to sell her again—cheap. I heard of a nephew who had sold his aunt twice.

In a report on the missionary work in Albania made by the Franciscan father Donato Maria di Trento in 1740, he states that the priests are doing all they can to prevent parents from allowing the betrothed to cohabit before marriage, which custom, he says, is universal, and describes as "a most foul torrent of universal concubinage." "They will not contract marriage till offspring is obtained."

Girls being thus married without any choice of their own, and being miserable in strange surroundings, were naturally apt to run away. In the above report this is constantly mentioned as cause of great trouble and feud. Thus Padre Candido reports from Gruda, January 31, 1740: "Women are running away every day, even after marriage." And P. Bonaventura says: "The women are running away *a grandissima furia*."

The custom of child betrothal and payment of parents is described and signed by thirteen padres and the Bishop of Scutari in 1731, and it is stated that it is great disgrace for the betrothed to see each other before they cohabit, or for the bride even to speak with the relatives of the bridegroom. The two parties are never consulted, and "in this country the youth never make love."

To counteract these difficulties the Mission makes much use of the local custom of swearing a common oath in which those swearing it call down all kinds of imprecations on their heads should they be forsworn. Consequent upon the swearing of many such oaths the Mission reports sixty-four marriages celebrated either before or immediately after cohabitation. P. Bonaventura triumphantly states that thirteen married by him are still with their husbands; but of those

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

friendly familiar faces, smelling the delicious odor of corn bread baking and hearing the tinkling bells of goats.

"Where is America?" said our hosts, and: "How large are your tribes? Do they have villages like ours, and mountains? Do you raise corn? How many donkey loads do you raise to a field, and what is your method of cultivating the soil? Have you stone ditches for carrying water from the rivers to the fields?" Rousing ourselves, we tried to give them in words a picture of our cities; we told of horses made of iron, fed by coal, snorting black clouds of smoke and racing at great speeds for long distances on roads made of iron; and I told of the irrigation systems of California's valleys, and Oregon's; of orchards plowed by steel-shod plows; of great machines as large as houses, cutting grain on the plains of Kansas; of mountain streams like Albanian mountain streams, which we harness as one might harness a donkey, and how their invisible strength is carried unseen on wires for many, many long hours—as far as an Albanian could walk in two days—and used to turn wheels far away.

Resting comfortably on their heels around the fire, they listened as one would listen to a traveler from Mars, the men opening silver tobacco boxes and deftly rolling cigarettes for us, the women spinning, the children—each given its space in the circle—propping little chins on beautiful, delicate hands and listening wide eyed. The questions they asked—and the elders were

PEAKS OF SHALA

as courteous to the children's curiosity as the children were to theirs—were keen and intelligent, but when it came to explaining electricity I was as helpless as they and could answer only with vague indications of some strange unknown force which we use without understanding it. 609

A woman, barefooted, barearmed, graceful as a sculptor's hope of a statue, lifted the cover from the baking-pan, crossed herself, made the sign of the cross over the hot loaf, and took it up. Stooping, with the smoking golden disk between her hands, she stopped, suddenly struck motionless. The long, strange cry came again through the darkness, like a voice of the wind and the mountains and the night. 776

"Look here, Perolli," said I, my stretched nerves unexpectedly relaxing into the kind of anger that is part of fear, "what is that? Don't be an idiot! Tell me!"

"It is an ora,[1] if you must know," said Perolli, and he looked at me defiantly, as though he expected me to laugh.

"An ora!" said Frances, sitting up. The strange, unearthly call came again, very far away this time; we strained our ears to hear it. Then silence and the roaring of the river. The turbaned men in the circle of firelight, who had understood the word, nodded.

"Holy crickets! Rose Lane, we're actually hearing an oread!" Frances exclaimed. And Alex said: "Oh no! Undoubtedly there is some natural explanation."

1 [A nature spirit, see also [61] cat. 116, pp. 45-6, pp. 66-76 -- Analyst]

PEAKS OF SHALA

423 578 "With my own hands I laid the roof upon it. It is my house. I will not give up my house."

Frances and I hugged each other in silent convulsions of delight. My pen spilled ink on my excited hands as I tried to capture their words in shorthand. I was seeing, actually seeing with my own eyes, the invention of private property!

"What are they going to do about it?"

The question was not too tactful, nor too happily received, but they answered it. "They have already called a council of the whole village four [627] times," said Perolli. "They will do nothing about it.* Houses belong to the tribe. It is a large house, and the people have decided that her dead husband's brother shall have it for his household. She has been offered a place in it. If she does not want that, she can live wherever she likes in the tribe. No one will refuse shelter or food to her and her children. She has friends with whom she can live, since she quarrels with her husband's brother. All this is absurd, and they will not call another council to satisfy a foolish woman."

"I want my house," said the woman.

Then the oldest man—one of the little boys was playing with the silver chains around his neck, and another hung heavily against his shoulder, but his dignity was undisturbed and he was obviously chief of the chiefs—appealed to me.

609 423 "In your country, what would you do with such a woman?" And I perceived that I was

* [For data on this gnie - [107] vance, see cat. 116, pp. 97-101, 104-107 -- Analyst]

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

obliged to explain to this circle of eager listeners a system of social and economic life of which they had never dreamed, of which they knew as little as we know of the year 2900.

The woman sat impassive, as unmoved as a rock of her mountains; the younger men turned, propping their chins on their elbows and looking at me attentively, and the chiefs waited with expectation. The children, settled comfortably here and there in the mass of lounging bodies, stopped their quiet playing to listen.

"Go on," said Alex, with friendly malice. "Just tell them what private property is."

"I expect sympathy, not ribald mirth," said I. "Well," I said, carefully, "tell them, Perolli, that when I say 'man' I mean either a man or a woman. It isn't quite true, of course, but I'll have to say that. Now then. In my country, a man owns a house."

"*Po! Po!*" they said, shaking their heads from side to side in the sign that in Albanian means, "Yes." "It is so here. A man owns the house in which he lives."

"No, it's not that. In my country, a man can own a house in which he does not live."

Then they were surprised. "You must have many houses in your tribe, if some are left vacant."

("Shades of the housing situation!" murmured Alex. "Shut up!" said I.)

"No," I said. "You don't understand. In my country a man owns a house. It is his very

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

own house. He owns it always; he owns it after he is dead. He owns it when other people live in it."

"In your country dead men own houses? Dead men live in houses?"

"No. Living in a house has nothing to do with owning a house. A man owns a house; it is his house; other people live in that house, and they pay him money to be allowed to live in his house."

"We do not understand. In your country do men of the same tribe pay one another money for houses?"

"Yes."

There was always a pause after I had spoken, while they pondered.

"Ah!" they said. "In your country a man can build a house all by himself. You have one man who makes all the houses for the village, and the others divide with him the money they earn outside the tribe."

"No," I said. "In my country many men must work to build a house." And I tried to think how best to go on.

"But it is so here," they said. "Many men of the tribe build a house, and then the house is a house of the tribe."

"But it is different in my country," I insisted. "In my country the house does not belong to the tribe. It belongs to the man who owns the land on which it is built, and he pays money to the men who build it for him, and then it is his house.

PEAKS OF SHALA

423 Even if he lives somewhere else, it is still his
609 house. Now in the case of this woman, the house would belong to her husband, and when he died he would give her the house, and then it would be her house. It would belong to her. The tribe would not own the house, but she would pay money to the tribe from time to time, because she had the house."

("Don't tell me you're going to explain taxation, too!" chortled the joyous Frances. "For the love of Michael, do this yourself, then!" said I.)

But the chiefs passed over the taxation idea; they stuck to the main point, though their eyes were clouded with bewilderment.

"How can a man own land?" said one, more in amazement than in question. And, "But how can a man pay another man for helping him to build a house, except by helping him as much in building another house? And when all have helped one another equally, then no man would have two houses unless every man had two houses, and that would be foolish, for half the houses would be empty," reasoned another, slowly.

It was then that the remarkable intelligence of these people began to dawn on me. For, given the experience from which he was reasoning, I consider this one of the most intelligent and logical methods of meeting a new idea that I have known. A case of almost pure logic, given his starting point.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EG1 Albania EG1

PEAKS OF SHALA

A bridge of two logs, with railing of twisted branches, ran from bowlder to bowlder across this incredible river, and we stood on it, gazing at these colors and at a cliff that rose before us, striped rose and green and gray and white in long jagged lines, as though it had been painted, when we heard overhead an outburst of cries, like a hundred sea gulls shrieking in a storm. We looked higher, and there on the top of the cliff we saw a score of boys, naked except for bright loin cloths, engaged in acrobatics.

They made pyramids of their wet white bodies; four, three, two, one, they stood on one another's shoulders, and the four who upheld the pyramid ran swiftly along the edge of the cliff, passing and circling about a similar pyramid; from top to top of the pyramids the top youths swung, passing each other in the air, landing on other shoulders, balancing, taking flight again. The pyramids melted, as though dissolved in the rain, and formed again, while all along the edge of the precipice other boys made a freize of living bodies, turning cart wheels, somersaulting over one another, walking on their hands.

We stood paralyzed. What did it mean? Then there was an explosion of shots; the cliffs around us crackled like giant firecrackers, the air seemed to fall in fragments around us, and through the din came multiplied shouts. Four tall chiefs appeared on the cliff trail, gorgeous in black and white and red and blue and green and silver. We were being welcomed to Thethis.

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

PEAKS OF SHALA

756 The shouts redoubled, rifles cracked from
609 every rock, the church bell wildly rung, and
• through the clamor, deafened and a little dizzy, we came into the village of Thethis. The four chiefs, having greeted us ("Long life to you! Glory to your feet! Glory to the trails that brought you!" they said) preceded us up the last breathless quarter of a mile of trail, and all along the way the boys turned handsprings on the cliff tops.

361 The village of Thethis is built on the plateau that tops the gigantic, shiplike rock wedged in the narrow head of Shala Valley. All around it rise the mountains, snow capped, seamed with white waterfalls like rich quartz with streaks of silver; the shadows of them lie almost all day long across the village. Thethis itself is perhaps thirty large, oblong stone houses scattered at wide intervals on the flat land, and all the land is divided neatly into squares by stone fences—some fields for corn, some for grain, some for meadow. In the midst stands the church, two stories, oblong and gray like the houses, and a network of trodden paths leads to it.

It seemed a quiet, peaceful place. But on the mountains above it to the north the Serbian armies lay; their mountain-trained eyes were doubtless watching us as we crossed the sodden fields. This is the village, these are the chiefs, whose houses were destroyed by a company of soldiers sent from the struggling Albanian government in Tirana. The Serbs held the Albanian

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

cities where the men of Thethis have always gone to market; the grazing lands where they have always fed their sheep lie in the grasp of Serbian armies. Scutari, the nearest free Albanian market place, is a hundred miles away across two mountain ranges. Therefore it was said that Thethis was friendly to the Serbs; it was said that her men still went to market in the Albanian cities that are now clutched by Serbia, that spies came and went across the border, that the chiefs listened to the clink of Serbian gold. And Alex and I remembered that in Thethis we were not to address Rrok Perolli, secretary of the Albanian Minister of the Interior, by his real name.

But he was behind us on the trail, doubtless still engaged in trying to get breakfast for Frances in the house we had left, and we went forward with easy minds to meet Padre Marjan. He came barefooted and bareheaded across the fields to welcome us, a thin, ascetic-looking man in the brown robes of the Franciscan friar. Large brown eyes burned in his face that seemed made of bones and stretched skin, the grasp of his thin hand was hot and nervous. He spoke to us in Albanian, Italian, and German, ushering us with apologies into the bleak rooms above the church.

The Serbians and Montenegrins, in their drive down toward Scutari, had looted the church, he said. He had come into Thethis two months ago, and found not even a wooden stool left. He was doing his best, but it took time ——

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EG1 Albania EG

PEAKS OF SHALA

The rickety broken stairway led upward to a long hall; from this, a door let us into the living room. It was bare; rain-stained wooden walls and a floor that clattered beneath our feet. The one window was shattered; fragments of glass held together by pasted paper. There were a long wooden table and a bench, nothing more. No fire. Our soaked garments were suddenly cold on us, and a chill entered our very bones.

The only fire in the house, he said, was in the kitchen. We begged him to take us to it, and in a moment we were sitting on a bench before a crackling fire in a big stone fireplace. The tiny room was crowded with villagers, the floor was muddy with their trampling, and more arrived every moment. Padre Marjan had no servant, but all were eager to help him. Some took off our shoes, others heated water over the fire, a handsome youth who looked Serbian and talked German anxiously beat eggs and sugar together while Padre Marjan made coffee. The warmth and the genuine welcome they all gave thawed us and made us happy, and we sat drinking the heartening mixture of eggs and coffee, while clouds of steam rose from us all and a babble of talk went on.

One tall, handsome chief—Lulash, his name was, and beyond doubt he was the handsomest man we had yet seen—brought us a lamb as a gift. Dripping beside him stood a ragged boy, barefooted and blue with chill, who had come down the valley to bring us three eggs, which he

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

carried tied around his waist in a pouch of goat's skin. He put them carefully into our hands, and we tried to return the gift with some pieces of hoarded candy. But he gazed in dismay at the strange things, and nothing would persuade him to taste them. A colored handkerchief, however, was accepted in an ecstasy that made him dumb; he could only lay it upon his heart and touch our hands to his forehead. Another chief came with a fat hen, others with eggs; all were eager to roll cigarettes for us, all were smiling, and in a hundred beautiful phrases they overwhelmed us with thanks for our coming, for our presence, for the school that Alex and Frances had promised Thethis. For this was to be the first of the mountain schools, and Alex, who had come into the mountains to decide where to put the other two, was delighted to learn that already, before the school building was begun, Padre Marjan had started the school, and Lulash had promised a hundred trees to be burned to make lime for the building.

We sat talking of these things while Padre Marjan set pots of soup to boiling in the fireplace, broke eggs, unlocked his box of precious flour, busied himself with all preparations for dinner, climbing over and around the tangle of lounging bodies, until another outbreak of echoing noises announced the arrival of Frances and Perolli and Rexh and our men with the packs. We felt a little tension with Perolli's arrival, seeing the keen eyes of the men fixed on his English

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

609 S74 clothes and swarthy, intelligent face. He is as tall as most Europeans, but he was small among those giants, and the neat leather-holstered revolver and dagger that hung from his belt looked inadequate among all those long, bristling rifles.

But Padre Marjan, unaware of our apprehensions, was altogether the happy welcoming host. He greeted the dripping Frances warmly, anxious only to make her comfortable—she who was also responsible for the hope of a school in Thethis. He welcomed Perolli also, calling him by his first name. "How does he know that Perolli's name is Rrok?" we girls asked one another with startled eyes—and then, turning to the chiefs with a radiant smile, "This guest," said Padre Marjan, with pleasure, "is Rrok Perolli, the secretary of the Minister of the Interior in Tirana."

000 You read of such things calmly. Nothing that one reads is real to him. Therefore you can never know what Padre Marjan's innocent words meant to us as he spoke them in his crowded kitchen in Thethis, at the headwaters of the Lumi Shala, a hundred miles and twenty centuries from anything you know.

The wildness, the savagery and isolation of those mountains seemed to come into the room. A hundred miles to Scutari, a hundred miles of almost impassable mountains between us and any kind of help. There we were, three girls and a boy, alone in the narrow valley beneath the eyes of the Serbs, the Serbs who six months

6: Lane T-3 (no date) 1923 EGl Albania EGl

POSTSCRIPT

Cicero sat with parchment and stylus, writing home to Rome for money to pay his way back—because, as he admitted with some chagrin, he had wasted all his substance in that merry and wicked city. Even for Cicero Durazzo had, in addition to its living charms, the flavor of antiquity, for the Roman city was built on the ruins of the older Albanian seaport.

A year earlier there had been no automobiles in Albania, but now, to our surprise, we found a valiant small Ford waiting at the pier, and engaged it at once to take us to Tirana, forty miles away. Our baggage was a problem until the chauffeur of a government truck, addressing us in French, volunteered on his own responsibility to take it to the capital for us. "Pay? *Mais, non!*" said he, hurt. "You are Americans, and the stranger in Albania is our guest."

The road from Durazzo to Tirana crossed the low mountains that, from Trieste to Valona, make the endless monotonous eastern wall of the Adriatic. When you come over the crest of them you see lying before you the green low central valley and the farther blue peaks of the lands of the hidden tribes. And everything accustomed, everything commonplace, everything that reflects ourselves to us, is left behind. Gray water buffalo, flat-nosed, curly-horned, monstrous beasts that seem risen from depths of primeval slime, plod down the road drawing high, narrow wagons of wickerwork on huge wooden wheels. Shaggy, small donkeys carry picturesque folk down the

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

Royal Engineers, and Corporal Williamson of the Black Watch, their wireless operator. 669* 648

From Derna they were flown to Epirus and there were dropped to one of the British Missions which were already working with the Greek resistance movement. Albania was only a few miles away, but the Greeks knew nothing of the Albanian guerillas; and Maclean and Smiley therefore walked across the border to find them for themselves. They were received in the villages with elaborate courtesy and hospitality, but met with none of the pro-Allied enthusiasm which had been the rule in Greece. Despite their strikingly Nordic appearance, they were presently detained as Greek spies and stood in danger of their lives until they had satisfied their captors that they were genuine British officers. Even then an atmosphere of suspicion surrounded them; they were conscious all the time of being watched; and yet their efforts to come into touch with the guerillas were baffled at every turn. At last one night they came face to face with a representative of the "Partisans"; he brought them to the guerilla camp; and gradually they discovered the true nature of the Albanian resistance movement. [609]

4

Two seeds of revolt had been planted in Albania: the United Front, built up by British efforts and led by chiefs of proven valour; and a Communist cell, Russian instructed and composed of new men. The fortunes of war had cut them off in turn from their patrons, and for a long time they were no more than bands of wanted fugitives; a powerful ferment, but powerless of themselves. Revolutions are not made without leaders, but never by leaders alone. Some men indeed are always ready to risk their lives for their ideals, but the mass of a people will not defy their rulers unless the hopes of happiness which they set upon revolt are sharply stimulated by the goad of their present discontents. Now the Albanians experienced no violent crises of an economic or social nature such as nourished, and in large measure underlay, the resistance movements of Greece 669*

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

574 the head of it we found an old man with his two sons tending a flock of sheep. It was midday, and so we broke our journey [609] to accept their profferred hospitality of sheep's milk and pancakes dipped in honey. The old shepherd was not the least surprised to learn that we were British officers, but became very excited when he discovered that we had just come from Cairo. It then appeared that he had fought in the Ottoman army in the Tripolitanian war and had escaped to Egypt after the defeat of the Turks. There he had become a bodyguard to King Fuad and had served that Prince for fifteen years, both before and after his accession to the throne. He was overjoyed at the chance of practising his few words of Arabic and of reminiscing about the Egyptian leaders of his time; and it was only with difficulty that we restrained him from killing a sheep in our honour. Presently we rose to leave, and the old man shouldered his rifle to speed us on our way. The Albanian code of hospitality requires that the host should accompany his guests for an hour on their road to protect them against attack. In practice the full formality is usually abridged, but our shepherd friend was so genuinely anxious to express his goodwill that he guided us for the next seven hours of the march down to the main road leading to Dibra. There he bade us farewell in Arabic, and with great dignity declined our tactful offers of remuneration. By good fortune, however, I still had with me a box of Egyptian cigarettes and a few Egyptian piastres, which he gladly accepted as a souvenir of our meeting.

000 We had seen two cars on the road in the early afternoon, but there was now no sign of traffic. We therefore marched boldly along it, rejoicing in its even surface and in its breadth, which allowed us to walk two or more abreast and so to talk in comfort. Just before the light failed we came to a place where the road curved sharply eastwards along the face of a cliff. There, for the first time, we caught sight of the Black Drin, winding through the plain of Dibra. Two hours later, after a march which had lasted altogether twelve hours, we reached the house of Aziz Dino Hoja, a granite keep four stories high, situated only a few yards from the river. There Riddle was waiting.

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

rem's open hostility. Their aim was to keep Muharrem neutral; ours was now to bring him back into the war.

We left Riddle's base on the 29th of May, and, just before sunset, climbed on to the range that forms the eastern wall of the Drin gorges. The powerful river lay two thousand feet below us, narrowly compressed between smooth black cliffs, through which its deep and swirling waters ran a vivid blue, stained by the copper deposits in the rock. Beyond the jagged peaks of Liuma towered into the sky, and, with the approach of darkness, the scene became awe-inspiring, almost Wagnerian. We followed a narrow path scratched in the face of the cliff above the river, and now and then passed little stone cairns beside it. Each marked a grave and guarded the bones of some traveller who had fallen to his blood enemy, lying in wait. The dead were buried where they had been killed; for the path was too steep and the way too long to bring their bodies home for funeral.

Night overtook us on the march, but we pressed on until we came to a cluster of buildings, surrounded by a high crenellated wall. This was Muharrem's[2] castle. Our guards called out and beat upon the gates, and, after an exchange of shouts with shadowy figures on the battlements, we were admitted to a wide courtyard. In front of us was a stone building, founded on a rock, and on the steps leading up to it stood the lord of Liuma, with a bodyguard beside him holding a torch of blazing pinewood. He bowed to us, introducing himself as Bairaktar, and led the way indoors to a room furnished with tables and upholstered chairs, the first I had seen in Albania. There we sat down for the customary exchange of greetings; and presently coffee was brought.

Muharrem was of stocky build, dressed in a plain grey uniform with a lumberjack's leather cap on his head. He looked not unlike Kaiser Wilhelm, with the same iron grey hair and moustache, loose mouth, and small piercing eyes. When at rest there was an almost abnormal concentration in his gaze, and sometimes a sly smile would cross his face, as if prompted by his inward thoughts. He was reserved of speech

[1] [British liaison officers -- Analyst]

[2] [Muharrem Bairaktar, chieftain of Liuma clan -- Analyst]

7: Amery G-5 (1943-44) 1948 EG1 Albania EG1

and his delivery rapid and jerky. In his years of exile he had acquired a working knowledge of French and German; and, though the limitations of his vocabulary were only matched by his Olympian disregard of syntax, we were delighted to avoid the boredom of badly interpreted conversation. The evening meal was served towards midnight in a separate dining-room, and was distinguished by excellent Turkish dishes and a coarse red wine, pressed from the Liuman vineyards. At table we were waited on by Muharrem's two sons, who stood guard behind our chairs while we ate. Both were grown men, but treated their father with almost servile respect.

Next morning Muharrem laid before us an ambitious plan for raising the Gheg tribes against the Germans. This was set out in the form of a memorandum addressed to the British Government, and contained an interesting analysis of the Balkan situation, as well as detailed proposals for the organisation and strategy of a resistance movement. Appended to it was an estimate of the military supplies that would be needed to equip and maintain the tribes. Muharrem's general argument was that the useful military operations of the L.N.C. were becoming increasingly subordinated to their questionable political aims. The interests, therefore, of Albania and of Great Britain required the promotion of an Albanian Nationalist movement, which would attack the Germans with greater zeal than was shown by the L.N.C., and would seek to take over political power in the hour of victory. He, Muharrem, was prepared to undertake the leadership of such a movement if we would provide him with the necessary arms and sinews of war.

We insensibly eroded this bold and visionary scheme until, after two hours' discussion, Muharrem agreed to our more modest proposal. This was that he should organise and lead the resistance movement in the valley of the Black Drin. He declined, however, to accept our thesis that no supplies could be sent to him before he had attacked the enemy, and remarked with some plausibility:

"I have fought against the Italians, and I intend to fight against the Germans. If you will send me arms I will fight

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

might mean his going a long way round in future, the third owner could not oppose their wish. Again the land on both sides of an alley which three families used might belong to a fourth man. If he persuaded or bribed two of the three to let him plough it up, the third man had to acquiesce. A third type of blind alley began and ended in a single field.

All types of alley were private property reserved for the sole use of their owner, joint or single, and his family and lawful visitors. If he found anyone else on it he could turn him back as an intruder, and if he refused to comply could shoot him. This was irrespective of whether he did damage or not. An honest man would not trespass. Consequently, a trespasser's intentions were felonious. In Labinot a 'foreigner' from another village was licensed to use the blind alley once. He might be unaware that he was trespassing. In Zerqan, too, if he did not trespass more than once most owners said nothing to avoid disgracing themselves. A foreigner has his rights. In truculent Lumë no allowance was made for ignorance. About 1900 three men lost their lives because a stranger from the town of Prizren rode by pure mischance along a blind alley in a field in the village of Stiqan and resisted the owner's attempt to turn him back. In all districts a fellow-villager who trespassed could not plead ignorance as a stranger could; consequently his fault was graver. Even so he was not shot in Zerqan till other measures had been tried and failed. First the owner asked him not to use the blind alley again. If he persisted the owner complained to the village and the village forbade the man to go by the path. If he still persisted the village fined him. If he still persisted the owner shot him. Such was the theory, but in practice a strong man skipped the diplomatic stages and shot the offender at his first or second offence. Sometimes a fellow-villager who had a genuine need to use a private road, for instance, to regulate his irrigation water, might be given permission to do so. But he had to go on foot and could not take his horse.

In Godolesh, exceptionally, the question of damages affected the rules for blind alleys. Such paths traversed the market gardens on which the village still depended for most of its livelihood. Usually each belonged to several owners, any of whom might use it throughout its length, though they were forbidden to introduce animals as these might damage the fruit and vegetables. A trespasser was pardoned up to three times, then one or more owners

10: Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

where damnation follows. When the last big stone was in place the witnesses fired in the air to signify that the ceremony was over.

When a geographical feature was available, it was often utilized as a boundary. For instance, an irrigation channel might be recognized as such. The dividing line between the neighbours then ran down the middle. It could not be diverted or otherwise interfered with by either neighbour, since it contained running water and had been made long years before—a point that gave it the permanence indispensable in a boundary. In Mirditë a very old tree sometimes marked the division between two pieces of land. In all areas growing trees of any age might outline forest and even village boundaries. Notches were cut in each; all the ground this side of a notch belonged to one neighbour and all on that to the other. Between big units such as villages or forests, though not small ones like fields or houses, a watershed or a torrent bed often formed the boundary. 'God has separated the two; nature has decided their boundaries', said the people of such cases. Sometimes a road was the boundary between the villages; a field-path was never important enough for this purpose. Finally, in some groups of villages near Elbasan, such as Godolesh, Griqan and Labinot, there was so much buying of land in one village by natives of the others that no very definite line was drawn between their territories, though the boundaries of individual properties were as clearly marked and as fiercely defended as they were elsewhere. In the north, since no outsider could buy land in a village, there was no fluidity of boundary, whether village or private.

The delimiting elder was usually one of the recognized elders of the village. Sometimes only one was employed, more often there was one for each new neighbour, and in sprawling areas like Martanesh ten or even fifteen men might be asked to help. In Shijan elders often worked only 'for the good of their soul' and took no fee; elsewhere they charged one to two napoleons according to local rates. In Surroj they asked no less than four napoleons but seldom received them; to save this heavy fee, the older of the new neighbours set up the boundary stones, and only if he seemed to be cheating did a younger man think it necessary to call in an elder. That elder carried the earth and stone of the oath on his shoulder. In Çermenikë, however, he carried them in his hands and in Labinot he did not carry them at all, only spoke of doing so. Both these usages seem degenerations from the original. The

10:Hasluck F-5 (1926-1939)1954 EGl Albania EGl

nor produce nor an exchange for summering the flocks brought to the Crown (Kunora) by tribesmen living north of Shkodër, but welcomed them because their sheep manured the fields. Comparatively recently, Lurë gave a Selitë man leave to summer his flocks gratis on Mt Murije, which, lacking their manure, would hardly have been worth the labour of tilling. Dervish Ali of Fulqet too was glad to let hundreds of sheep graze free in his meadows on Mt Dragû. Surroj and Arrn pastured sheep belonging to the Hereditary Captain of Mirditë without payment, because they also had so little arable land.

Except where the soil was so poor that the manure was welcome, as in Lurë, or where grazing was very plentiful, as in Theth, outsiders were rigidly excluded from alps which were owned or rented by a community. Nangë said it had not enough feed for its own flocks. Martenesh, Gurrëzë and Breg i Matit said they did not want their pastures disturbed by strangers. All infringements of the ban, both petty and grave, were punished by fines.

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania Eg1

yaghourt. The publicity of the cooking arrangements, which is common to all Albanian eating-houses, has its advantages. It makes a menu unnecessary. The foreigner, just as easily as the native, can see for himself what food is available and can indicate the dish of his choice by pointing to it. In the inn at Argyrocastron, however, the publicity went unpleasantly far, for hanging from a rail of the staircase was to-morrow's dinner in the raw state—a defunct sheep all ready for roasting whole, with a long wooden spit struck through it lengthwise. This revolting sight brought me to the verge of vegetarianism, but since Albania, like Montenegro, is essentially a meat-eating country, I realised that it was not a suitable place to begin experiments in a vegetable diet, and I was therefore obliged to stifle my better instincts and carry on for the nonce in the old carnivorous way.

One feature of the Albanian inns that the traveller will remark is the absence of womenfolk. All the household work is done—and usually done very badly—by men or boys. At Argyrocastron the "chambermaid" was an Italian-speaking Albanian, dressed in a very old and shabby khaki uniform, who spared no pains to make me as comfortable as circumstances permitted, and was exceedingly grateful for the few liras I gave him on leaving. In fact, neither in Albania nor in Montenegro did I find that distressing greed for tips which is so characteristic of countries which claim to be much more civilised. Before I left Cettinje, being anxious to show my appreciation of services rendered by the

2:Edmonds T-3 (1926?) 1927 E13 Balkan Peoples
Albania EG1

To the Land of the Eagle

609 consulate staff during my stay, I offered the maid—who had, incidentally, washed all my linen for me—a sum equivalent, I think, to about 2s. When at last, after some difficulty, I succeeded in making her accept it she seized and kissed my hand—to my intense embarrassment. And Vojn, who had carried my things for miles over the mountains and had given me ungrudging attention, behaved in exactly the same way and at first refused my modest offering. His manner did not, however, convey that he was too proud to accept the tip or that I had made a *faux pas* in offering it, but merely that what he had done he had done in goodwill and not with any idea of reward. It was refreshing, in these money-grubbing days, to meet with such an unexpected trait.

349 Before I left Argyrocastron I explored the old fortress. It proved to be a vast place full of arches, tunnels, and broken masses of masonry overrun with scarlet poppies. A few sleepy-looking, barrack-like buildings housed a few sleepy soldiers. The battlements gave a fine view of the town, the valley, and the mountains.

494 On making enquiries about getting to Koritza I found that a post lorry was leaving at midday. I therefore booked a front seat for which the price was 150 liras (Italian money being current in this part of Albania). I thought at the time that this was a rather heavy charge as Koritza was, as I then fondly imagined, only about three hours journey away. We should be there, I thought, in the classic English phrase, " in time for tea ". We were not. Nor were we there in time for tea on the day following. So I was slightly out in